

SOUTHWEST COORDINATING GROUP (SWCG)

March 18, 2004 Meeting Minutes

USFS Prescott National Forest Supervisors Office, Prescott, AZ

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Waterbury (Chair), Bob Lee, Bryan Swift, Nancy Neskauskas, Kirk Rowdabaugh, Willie Begay, Dugger Hughes, Jay Ellington (Exec. Sec.)

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Jeff Whitney, Pam McAlpin

GUESTS: Chuck Maxwell (SWCC), Tom Fry (NIFC, BLM)

The meeting began at 0900, March 18, 2004. Minutes for the February 23, 2004 meeting were reviewed and approved.

FOLLOW-UP AGENDA ITEMS FROM 2/23 MEETING:

2005 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING

DECISION: Tabled: SWCG working with Team IC's.

FIRE PLANNING UNIT

Follow-up discussion on the letter to be forwarded to NMICG and AICG is still in draft format.

DECISION: SWCG members will review and get comments back to Bill. Jay to post letter and draft maps to SWCG website when received.

ARIZONA FIRE SERVICE

Letter has been received by the Arizona Fire Service and has responded.

DECISION: No additional follow-up needed at this time.

NEW/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

NEW MEXICO PRESCRIBED FIRE SMOKE COORDINATION

Bob distributed a "draft" State-wide Prescribed Fire Smoke Coordination letter to be signed by SWCG for further distribution to the NM Zone Chairs.

DECISION: SWCG members reviewed and approved. Bill to sign and distribute.

BRIEFING TO NM GOVERNOR

Nancy requested assistance from the SWCG to brief the Governor & staff on the upcoming fire season in New Mexico. The briefing will include a discussion on smoke management.

DECISION: Nancy will set up date for SWCG/NM partners.

520/620 PRIORITY CANDIDATES

Bill distributed the current list of candidates, showing the applications that have been received. Several issues related to the topic were discussed, including T2 qualifications, completion of S-420, etc.

DECISION: SWCG will need to follow-up on several candidates for clarification and qualifications.

SW FIRE USE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Bill distributed the current list of team members and trainees. With the number and qualifications submitted, it looks like the Southwest will have a Fire Use Management Team for the 2004 fire season. In the 2004 National Mob Guide, wording will state that all WFU teams will fall under the jurisdiction of the NMAC at Preparedness Levels 4 & 5. Great Basin Area has made a request to the Southwest to set up a rotation schedule.

DECISION: The SWCG will turn-down the request from the Great Basin Area.

FUTA INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT

Bill distributed the FUTA Interagency Agreement requesting review and approval by the SWCG.

DECISION: SWCG members need to provide responses to Bill as soon as possible.

WFSa TRAINING

Recommendations have been made by the USFS to make revisions to current WFSa. Contractor is finalizing version 4.0 by May 25. R03 will conduct Train-the-Trainer session 5/11-15 (FUTA), and Agency Administrators 6/08 (ABQ) and 6/10 (PHX). The training will satisfy agency requirements for WFSa training.

DECISION: None

SWCG/MAC GROUP HANDBOOK

A review of the MAC Group Handbook was conducted with the following changes to be made:

- Throughout Handbook: Change SWFMB to SWCG. Change date in footer.
- General Operation Guidelines: Change Planning Levels to Preparedness Levels
- Roles and Responsibilities: Insert bullet under AA stating "Agency Administrators are invited to participate in any or all MAC Group meetings."
- Page 9: Change date, insert "Initial Attack" as number 1.
- Appendix 1: Add Line Officer into MAC Operations. Change NPS Field Director to Regional Director.
- Appendix 2: Insert initial attack
- Appendix 4: Add Agency Administrator under the first section "Introductions/Roll Call". Add statement on form to remind conference call participants to turn off cell phones, minimize side discussions, etc...
- Conference Call: Change Conference Call Phone PIN to something easy to remember.
- Create Pop-Up on Main Page of website when MAC Group is in session.
- Create abbreviations page for Weather information.
- Insert section detailing the SWCG/MAC Group website

LIVE FUEL MOISTURE PROGRAM

Chuck Maxwell provided the SWCG with a draft of the Guidelines for Fuel Moisture Monitoring in the Southwest Area and requested SWCG response. According to Chuck, the document has not gone out for full field review at this point, but is planned. After a short period of review, the SWCG recommended the document have examples of reports to be produced, move pages 16-18 to an appendix and change to fit fuel models appropriate to the Southwest, insert table showing Centigrade and Fahrenheit conversions, and list participants in the document.

DECISION: Chuck to draft letter for SWCG signature.

FIELD SPOT FORECAST FEEDBACK

Chuck Maxwell requested the SWCG provide assistance in getting units requesting spot forecast to provide feedback on their forecasts. According to the NWS, over the past fire season only 20-25 percent of spots provided by the NWS received some type of feedback.

DECISION: Chuck will draft a letter to be signed by the SWCG to be sent to agency FMO's. The letter will state this is a top priority by the SWCG.

WEATHER WORKING GROUP

At the request of the Weather Working Group, Chuck brought to the SWCG a proposal to change the Working Group to a Committee. A discussion followed pertaining to the need of a Weather Committee and whether this should include Fire Behavior and Smoke Management.

DECISION: Chuck to write a proposed charter for creation of a Weather/Fire Behavior Committee and present to the SWCG at the next meeting.

SW REC MEETING NOTES

Bob provided a review of topics and discussions held with the SW REC group from the February meeting. The top issue the SW REC would like to hear from the SWCG on is the 3-Tier Dispatching. The SW REC would like to hear something by September, but the SWCG is going to request a delay until the SW REC December meeting.

MEXICO BORDER AGREEMENT

Tom Fry gave a presentation to the SWCG on the current Mexico Border Agreement. He stated the cross border agreement between the U.S. and Mexico has been updated and is good for the next 10 years. The basics of the agreement states: if a fire on the Mexico side threatens U.S. resources, the U.S. can go over to

aggressive assist (with permission, of course). MOU and Agreement will be inserted in the 2004 National Mob Guide.

DECISION: The SWCG recommended the CNF/Mexico Agreement needs to be referenced in the National Agreement. In addition, the Geographic Area Ops Plan and Zone Bordering Ops Plan need completion. Documents should be posted to the SWCG website once completed.

The next meeting of the Southwest Coordinating Group is scheduled for May 25, 2004 in the Wendell Chino Bldg, Santa Fe, NM. Agenda topics:

- a. Review Preparedness Levels

The meeting adjourned at 1500, March 18, 2004.

/s/ Bill Waterbury

Chair

Southwest Coordinating Group

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